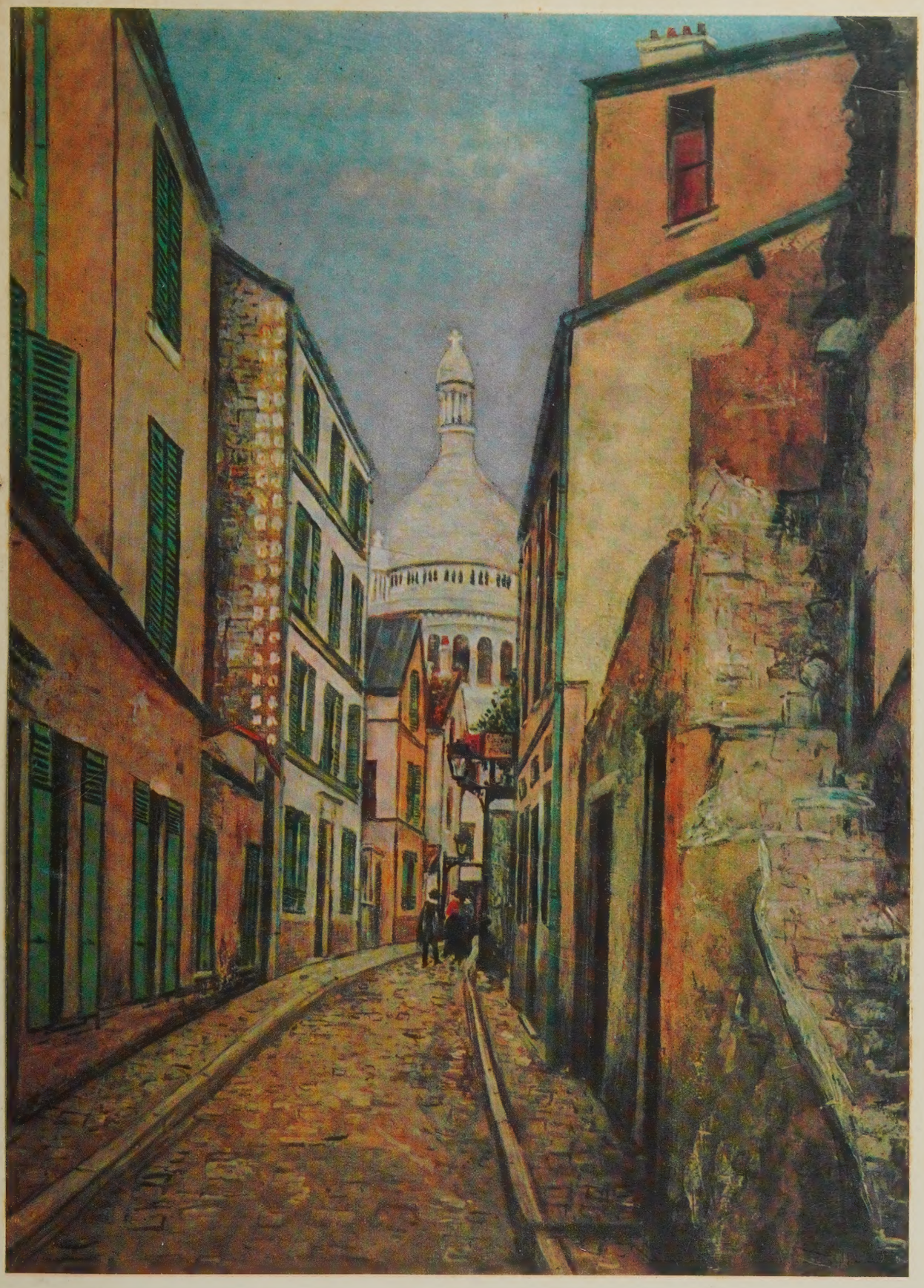

THE FOLIO ART BOOKS

GUY DORNAND

UTRILLO

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UTRILLO

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RUE SAINTE-RUSTIQUE

Circa 1919. Oil, 29½″×13″. Henri Gaffié Collection, Beaulieu-sur-Mer. (Ex Tronche Collection).

This characteristic picture of Utrillo's (reproduced in Vol. 2 of the *Complete Works* as No. 784) dates from 1919 and belongs to a series of paintings all inspired by this narrow street, parallel to the Rue Cortot and to the main village street and, like it, at right-angles to the Rue du Mont-Cenis and the Rue des Saules, where Utrillo was so often to be found walking, painting, lurching along and dodging the crowds, the urchins and the police. Certainly every house — and nearly every yard — of the street carries a memory of the man who painted it so often. There one can easily imagine his great dark, restless eyes appealing to the cross perched on the Byzantine dome year by year for ever deeper reassurance. This tacit feeling, intense yet diffused through the whole picture, instils a tenderness into the colours of the very ordinary walls of the street.

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UTRILLO

"Well, dear reader, one must begin at the beginning. I was born in Paris, in the Rue du Poteau (I suppose, though I do not know the number) on 25th December, Christmas Day, in the year of grace 1882. My mother, a saintly woman, whom in the depths of my heart I bless and revere as a goddess, a sublime example of goodness, rectitude, charity, unselfishness, intelligence, courage and devotion, a woman apart — perhaps the brightest star of this century in the firmament of art — brought me up in a consistently strict code of morals, right and duty.
"Alas, if only I had followed her wise advice! I let myself be drawn into the path of vice imperceptibly, by keeping company with vile and libidinous creatures, irresistible sirens with burning, treacherous eyes, who made of me, a slightly wilting flower, a revolting drunkard, an object of pity and public contempt."

These are the opening lines of Utrillo's *Autobiography of Maurice Utrillo, landscape painter*, written in 1921, and this confession immediately gives the reader the keys to all his innermost secrets, with one, vital, exception: the nature of the origin, resources and magic of his genius. As with Van Gogh, one cannot really know, let alone understand, his works if one does not make use of this biography, which places him instantly outside the common herd, and socially outside the boundaries of time and space — in fact shows that he is cast in no ordinary mould. Let us follow his advice and begin at the beginning.

The register of the birth of the future painter of Montmartre, at the town hall of the eighteenth precinct of Paris, simply gives the name of his mother as Marie Valentine Valadon, without mentioning the identity of his father. At the age of 16, this sharp country girl from the Limousin, the daughter of an honest washerwoman, showed an appetite for life as voracious as her lust for independence. Having a slim, strong peasant body, she started as a circus acrobat, but after a bad accident gave up this career. She was not attracted to laundering, but living near the Butte Montmartre, with its art students and the daily parade of models around the fountain in the Place Pigalle, a new career soon offered itself, and she became a model — in Montmartre, and aged barely 15! It would be ungracious to reproach her for this for several reasons, but mostly because of the countless Renoirs — for instance *La Danse à la Ville* — which reflect her rapacious youth; because of the many faces in Puvis de Chavannes's *Bois Sacré* whose slenderness is hers; because Toulouse-Lautrec sketched her, and even the severe, merciless Degas found her a source of inspiration for his mordant style. Doubtless many other painters asked more of her than just to strip for them, without maintaining Renoir's friendly but discreet reserve, which makes it difficult to put blind trust in a statement by the " terrible little Maria " as Degas called her. When questioned about the paternity of her son, one must admit that later on the great Suzanne Valadon (she had changed her baptismal names) did seem uncertain, though she had often spoken of a certain Monsieur Boissy, a notorious art student of the Butte, as the father of young Maurice. The circus painter and portraitist Edmond Heuzé, who knew her better than most, thought Puvis de Chavannes was the father, but there are many arguments against this: firstly, the fact that on 27th February, 1891, when he was already eight, Maurice was " recognized " legally as his son by the man whose name he made famous — Miguel Utrillo y Molins, a Catalan aristocrat, himself a talented painter, architect and stage designer; also that a legitimate son of this Spanish man of letters accepted him publicly as his brother; finally the close resemblance between Maurice's features and those of Miguel Utrillo.

Suzanne Valadon's first husband, Monsieur Mousis, the managing director of an important business, refused to " recognize " his wife's son, but thanks to him Maurice enjoyed a more normal life than that of his earliest years in the care of his devoted but frail grandmother. In 1893 his stepfather entered him at the Collège Rollin, where

he proved a very mediocre pupil in every subject, with the sole exception of arithmetic. Some of his schoolfriends have said that he was already a dreamy boy, by turns timid and fearless; shy and thin, with a long, bony face, long hands and a gentle, detached expression.

At this time a most trivial, material circumstance laid the foundation of the problems which were to shake and disorder Utrillo's whole future character, and even his existence by gaining for him the reputation of a madman. Because Monsieur Mousis and his wife lived at Montmagny, Maurice had to travel home from Paris every evening after school. He could have gone by train, but it is thought that he was usually driven home by some plasterers who were confirmed absinthe-drinkers. Whether or not that was in fact so, this delicate boy, whose shyness and innocence made him a continual butt for cruelty, teasing and blows throughout his school and college life, was tempted by all the attractions and the risks of playing truant.

In view of his indifferent school results, Monsieur Mousis decided to send Maurice into an apprenticeship, and so began in 1899 a pathetic, disjointed series of attempts at various humble jobs, which all ended in failure, both professional, and personal as they affected his health and character development. In 1900 he went to Sainte-Anne for his first course of treatment as an alcoholic, and then followed a period of unemployment, in which, paradoxically, he first turned towards his real vocation of painting. It was still a difficult and arduous beginning, since at first he refused to try either painting or drawing as a cure for his alcoholism — a course recommended to Suzanne Valadon by Dr. Ettlinger. However faced with the simple choice of painting or returning to the sanatorium, Utrillo resigned himself to the former and suddenly experienced another passion beside his love for cheap red wine. The year 1903 marked his true birth as a painter.

There is no point in dwelling in detail on his further visits to psychiatric institutions, but here follow the dates and places concerned: 1912 and 1914 — Sannois sanatorium; 1916 — Villejuif Asylum; 1918 — Clinic at Aulnay-sous-Bois, from which he escaped, and then entered the Picpus Asylum of his own accord; 1919 — Picpus again; 1921 — Sainte-Anne, then a nursing-home at Ivry. From 1924, when they bought the Château of Saint-Bernard dans l'Ain, not far from Lyons, Suzanne Valadon and her second husband, André Utter, were able to offer Utrillo a life of comfort which certainly favoured intense artistic activity, but in some ways strongly resembled a clinic, as he was constantly under the eye of a chauffeur or a nurse.

The twenty years (1903-1924) in which Utrillo's prodigious gifts and passionate vocation were revealed, were punctuated by a constant succession of drinking bouts, wanderings, trivial scandals, quarrels and brawls — the sordid trappings of the worst kind of Bohemian life — and simultaneously by the emergence of a natural genius which grew and thrived on physical suffering and moral anguish. Wherever he lived, in some wretched lodging at Montmagny, Pierrefitte, Butte-Pinson, Sannois (a northern suburb of Paris) or Montmartre itself, or when travelling in Corsica or Brittany, his addiction to drink tyrannized over him and drove him to the same excesses, debauches, humiliations, outrages and blows, whether from passers-by, the urchins of the Butte or the police.

It is natural to wonder what had happened to his mother during this period. The fact is that Suzanne Valadon was so absorbed in her own vocation and her own paintings, as well as in her determination to live furiously and freely without any restraint, that for years she had no wish to make a home for her son, who as a result drifted from one address to another when he was not confined in institutions. Her move to 12 Rue Cortot in 1909 with her new husband, André Utter, marked no favourable turning-point in Utrillo's circumstances, not because he was on bad terms with his stepfather (who was in fact younger than him and had long been one of his Montmartre companions, although never a close friend). On the contrary, he accepted the announcement of this marriage without resentment, but his mother and her new lover were reluctant to have their lives disturbed by visits from this poor tipsy, loquacious, dirty boy, whom they had no wish to look after, let alone nurse.

This was the situation at least until the sale of Octave Mirbeau's art collection in 1909 at the Hôtel Drouot, when it became clear that Utrillo's canvases had a certain commercial value in the art world. Fourteen years had already elapsed since the Montmartre picture-framer Anzoni had shown Utrillo's early works to a knowledgeable businessman, Clovis Sagot, and to Tabarant the critic, who summed up the painter's life and works as "*a daily booze and a daily masterpiece*". Thereafter the most decisive role in publicizing Utrillo's talent was played by another merchant called Libaude, who regularly bought his pictures, made him take part in the 1909 Salon d'Automne (Autumn Exhibition) and through Francis Jourdain introduced him to the doyen of aestheticians Elie Faure, to the celebrated novelist, pamphleteer and patron of new talent, Octave Mirbeau, the editor Paul Gallimard, the collector Kapferer, the actor Dorival and many others. In 1912, for the first time, Utrillo's name is to be found in the catalogue of a group exhibition in the centre of Paris, at the famous Druet Gallery in the Rue Royale.

Thereafter, weathering various changing winds and tides of fortune, Utrillo's career followed much the same course as that of any other artist in this century — he featured again at the Salon d'Automne in 1912, took part in the Salon des Indépendants in 1913, had his first private exhibition (organized by Libaude at the Blot Gallery, Rue Richepanse) in 1913 and his first sale at the Hôtel Drouot in 1914, where twenty Utrillos changed hands for 576 francs.

On 4th August, war broke out. Although he had never done military service Utrillo, at 31, was called up at Alençon, where his daily drinking sessions and nightly ravings in the barracks gave the army doctors ample excuse for discharging him. Though he was never mobilized again and so escaped the massive threat of death which faced millions of Frenchmen, he was not as fortunate as one might think. Left to his own devices in Rue Cortot, in this atmosphere so redolent of songs, dreams, poetry and art, but charged with a hidden spell powerful enough to capture stronger men than he, he drank (" *to paint better, and painted to drink better* " according to George Besson) and painted in order to recapture, through and in spite of his misery, the sensual yet pure visions of his adolescence. In this dark period he completed one of his most moving pictures, the *Rheims Cathedral*, executed in the grip of his emotion at the news that it had been shelled. He burned with patriotic zeal, while in his inner soul there developed a religious emotion of a power and mystic fervour which were to continue and grow within him to the end of his life.

His output at this time was prolific — no less than 200 oils between 1915 and 1919, as proved by the catalogue of his complete works, edited by Monsieur Paul Pétridès. He painted mean little streets in Paris and its suburbs, for to his romantic eyes " there are souls hidden away in these secretive houses " (from a letter to his mother). He painted scenes from the suburb so deeply bound up with his childhood and youth, and was named by the famous art critic Robert Rey its " *most sensitive and penetrating painter-poet, who perceived the sobs of countless sorrowing souls beneath the surface of the silent alleys, crumbling walls and sleepy little squares* ". He painted the streets of the Butte which were so often his *via dolorosa*, and the landmarks of his eternal universe — the Rue Sainte-Rustique, Place du Tertre, Rue du Mont-Cenis, Moulin de la Galette, the church of Saint-Pierre, the Sacré-Cœur. He also painted a whole rosary of churches — an anthology of ancient monuments all around his refuge in the Rue Cortot, whither he fled from the wickedness, inhumanity and cynicism of the outside world.

He was, emphatically, not mad. " *If I were mad, could I have done this?* " he protested one day, pointing to the picture he had just finished in his most sordid place of confinement. He was, however, a hopeless alcoholic, probably first led astray by malicious and stupid friends older than himself, but once he had become an inveterate drinker, every man or woman who crossed his path, every friend or casual acquaintance, encouraged him to greater excesses, so that he could be influenced to draw and paint for them. Roland Dorgelès, president of the Académie Goncourt and author of the romantic *Château des Brouillards* (*Castle of Mists*) and the nostalgic *Bouquet de Bohème* (*Bohemian Memories*) and *Beau Temps de la Butte* (*Heyday of he Butte*), wrote of him: " *He* may have vacillated, but his brushes never did ". Not only do those who knew and judged him well assure us that Maurice Utrillo was reasonably well read and educated, but we can also trust the wisdom and severity of Suzanne Valadon's judgment of the effects of alcohol on his work. On 23rd March, 1918 she wrote to Delloue: " *His best canvases have been painted, contrary to popular belief, when he was completely lucid and not the worse for drink* ". Nevertheless when the war ended and Suzanne Valadon and André Utter returned to Paris, Utrillo was sorely in need of their protection, without which he would have broken down completely.

In 1916, alone among merchants of lasting fame, the intuitive, friendly, but poor Zborowsky took an interest in Utrillo as he had in Modigliani and Soutine. In 1922, however, Utrillo's steadily growing fame was decisively crowned by two exhibitions, at the Weil Gallery and the Paul Guillaume Gallery. In 1923 he exhibited again at the Weil Gallery, and also at Barbazanges and Bernheim Jr. There his paintings were again to be found in 1924, and also at the Devambez Gallery.

From then on his fame grew and with it his fortune, of which Utter appointed himself manager. In 1924 Utter bought the Château of Saint-Bernard where Utrillo lived from then on when he was not in Paris with his mother and stepfather in their house in the Avenue Junot, under the shadow of the Moulin de la Galette. In 1928 President Edouard Herriot, the Minister of National Education, who was also a discriminating art connoisseur and had long been an admirer of Utrillo's work, awarded him the Legion of Honour and himself fastened the red ribbon to his lapel. Utrillo would have preferred the mauve one, that being the colour of the academic decoration of which he had dreamed as a boy.

In 1935, feeling her health declining, Suzanne Valadon began to worry about the fate of her son once she was dead,

and therefore urged his marriage to the widow of a banker and art collector, Madame Lucie Pauwels, who from then on watched over " the master " until his death with despotic devotion coupled with meticulous guardianship. So started a new existence for Utrillo — coddled, luxurious comfort, which he learned to appreciate and enjoy greatly, especially after he moved to " the good Lucie's " (Lucie Valore's) house at Vésinet.

A most decisive factor in Utrillo's life at this point was the signing in 1936 of an exclusive contract, renewed and strengthened perpetually thereafter, appointing Paul Pétridès sole dealer in his new pictures. Countless works by Suzanne had already passed through Pétridès' hands, and from her he had acquired since 1928 a gouache and an oil of Utrillo's before mounting two exhibitions of Maurice's work in 1934 and 1936 in his own gallery, then situated in the Avenue Delcassé.

The landmarks of the painter's last years, though they were overshadowed by the death of his mother in 1938, were a brilliant series of exhibitions: London, Adams Gallery, in 1937; New York, Valentine Gallery, in 1939; Venice Biennale in 1950 and Pétridès' Gallery in Paris in 1944 and 1947. His fame spread throughout the world, confirmed anew by his promotion to the rank of Officer of the Legion of Honour, and by a commission to design the sets for a new production of Charpentier's *Louise* at the Opéra-Comique in Paris. No modern aspect of the life of a successful artist was lacking: he illustrated Francis Carco's *Montmartre vécu* with 22 coloured lithographs; he was commissioned to paint two enormous panels to decorate the great hall of the Beaux-Arts at the Paris Hôtel de Ville; he designed a controversial film by Gaspard Huit with scenario by Roland Dorgelès, and in a Sacha Guitry film called *Si Paris m'était conté*, yielding to the famous dramatist's request, he appeared in person, painting a picture in the Place du Tertre. He did not lack imitators; false Utrillos were disclosed and legal action taken — the inevitable result of financial speculation in his works, which he had in former years given away or bartered for red wine or a five franc coin. In 1914, a dealer's board read " All at 20 francs each " and the poet Carco could boast of having bought his first Utrillo in that year for 100 francs. By 1956, a canvas dated 1912 fetched 3,100,000 francs, and prices have remained in the millions since Utrillo's death in 1955.

When in 1902 Suzanne Valadon forceably thrust pencils, charcoal and paint-brushes into her son's hands, and thereby gave him, not a remedy but endless hours of inner peace, a reason for living and ultimately glory, she added not only sheets of paper and cardboard, but much advice, notably to use the set-square and T left from his days at the Collège Rollin, since his report for drawing there had been " very bad "! She also gave him five tubes of paint, probably a zinc white, two yellows, a vermilion and a lake madder. Perhaps she also instilled in him the shrewdness which turned Maurice Valadon into Maurice Utrillo-Valadon and then into Maurice Utrillo-V.

Inevitably he grew in his mother's shadow and within her aura, which was the circle of eager artists, talking about their art, discussing technique, theory, ideals and dreams. From Delloue's house in the Rue Labat, via Gay's in the Rue Paul-Féval to the south slope of the Butte he heard painting discussed, studied pictures and at least glimpsed Pissarros, Sisleys, Toulouse-Lautrecs and Picassos, not to mention plenty of works by lesser-known masters including Raffaelli, whom he admired almost as much as Sisley. He has been compared — not wholly justifiably — to the last-named, but Utrillo himself was proud even to emulate him.

He could hardly have avoided the influence of impressionism, which thanks to Roger Marx's works at the Centennial Exhibition in 1900 played such an important role in his future glory. However when the young Maurice first painted the Montmagny and Pierrefitte gardens and the Montmartre alleys which were not yet stripped of their charm by banal or hideous practical modern city buildings, he naturally treated them with pre-impressionist, separated strokes of his brush.

It is worth noting that to begin with Utrillo painted in sombre colours, like Van Gogh at Nünen, like Turner, in fact like most great painters, but gradually passed from impressionist earthy browns, " pigmentary textures " and the " livid colours of nostalgia " mentioned by Robert Rey, through successive transformations prompted by his inspired intuition, beyond the striking, fantastic " white period " to his snow-clad canvases. Captious critics have found it necessary to condemn him for submitting to such a range of influence, and have senselessly branded his work as " uneven ". In view of his thousands of oils, watercolours and drawings which repeatedly depict the same scenes, unevenness is inevitable. Francis Carco considered Utrillo lacking in imagination, he himself — a poet and romantic novelist — having plenty, and even too much when it came to elaborating on the biographies of Bohemians. It is true that Utrillo needed no exotic world of fact, fantasy, imagination or the subconscious in order to enrich the universe which he transfigured and made his own, but just *his* Butte, *his* suburbs and all the churches which served to convey the sincerity of his faith and mastery of his art — an art essentially composed of facility and inventive powers arising from his prodigious instinct.

Though famous for his colourism — rich, glowing sonorities, gay, luminous or mystic tones — Utrillo unhesitatingly added the shades of sand and even plaster in his incomparable " white period ", which reached its peak in 1912-14. His draughtsmanship was a technique of well-judged and careful construction with the aid of his school set-square, which he used when drawing buildings, or skilfully planning perspectives opening onto secretive façades. And this man was supposed to be mad!

He drew inspiration from postcards collected by Utter or sent from friends, and Suzanne Valadon wrote to Yves Brayer " *So many painters just turn out picture postcards when confronted by nature, but my son uses postcards to make masterpieces !* ". He became a painter by constraint, though even in his most hasty scraps of work and in his paintings dating from the least propitious periods of his artistic life (including those he passed at the Château de Saint-Bernard) he demonstrated all the gifts necessary to justify the opinion of the painter and humanist André Derain: " *One can try to analyse Utrillo, but in almost all his paintings one is confronted by a miracle* ". As one enthusiastic critic put it: "*All that cannot be learned, cannot be taught and cannot be explained* " is to be found in his works of every period — " *They were all good* " — said Utrillo himself ingenuously. According to Pétridès, the periods can be identified as follows: 1903-05, Paris; 1906-07, Montmagny and Pierrefitte; 1903-08, Paris " the white period "; 1922-28, period of finesse and the " *gros derrières* "; 1928-32, period of Saint-Bernard, showing his mother's slightly astringent influence, and from 1938 until his death the Vésinet, or snowy, period. He died of congestion of the lungs at midday on 5th November, 1955 in a room in the Hôtel Splendid at Dax in the Landes, where his careful wife had hoped to protect him from the rigours of a Paris winter, and he was buried four days later at Saint-Pierre de Montmartre, on top of the Butte which had been in the true sense of the word his native and chosen homeland, and which he had immortalized in paint before going to his last rest in the Saint-Vincent Cemetery, 20 yards from the Lapin à Gill.

I must be excused for expressing my disapproval of the decorous masquerade at his funeral. How he would have deplored the riff-raff he hated delightedly indulging in noisy publicity stunts. He would have been really afraid of the crush of curious onlookers both at the funeral and at his posthumous exhibition, for as Dorgelès wrote " *happiness was not his native environ* ".

Poor " Pierre Lunaire "! He departed this life lamented by innumerable unknown people, by the little people of the Butte mourning their village " innocent ", who had stumbled on the uneven cobbles of Montmartre on the friendly arm of Quizet, his best mentor, or the sculptor Guyot, more often suffering from youthful hunger or moral distress than from drunkenness. Jacques Villon said to a friend " *My ancestor François would have loved him* "; the poet Paul Fort mourned him as the " Angel of Painting " and declared with Vlaminck: " *He was a master* "; Henry de Waroquier compared him to Fra Angelico and Waldemar George saw in him an heir to the medieval illuminators.

We will always mourn the marvellous vision which could conjure up out of an insipid postcard a landscape imbued with grace and vitality or bathed in nostalgic light; the genial simpleton who continued to resemble the fairy in Mallarmé's poem, even in the years when he had outlived himself — " *la fée qui dans* (ses) *rêves d'enfant passait - laissant de ses mains mal fermées - neiger de blancs bouquets d'étoiles parfumées* " (" The fairy who passes by in (his) childish dreams, letting fall like snow from her half-closed hands white clusters of scented stars ").

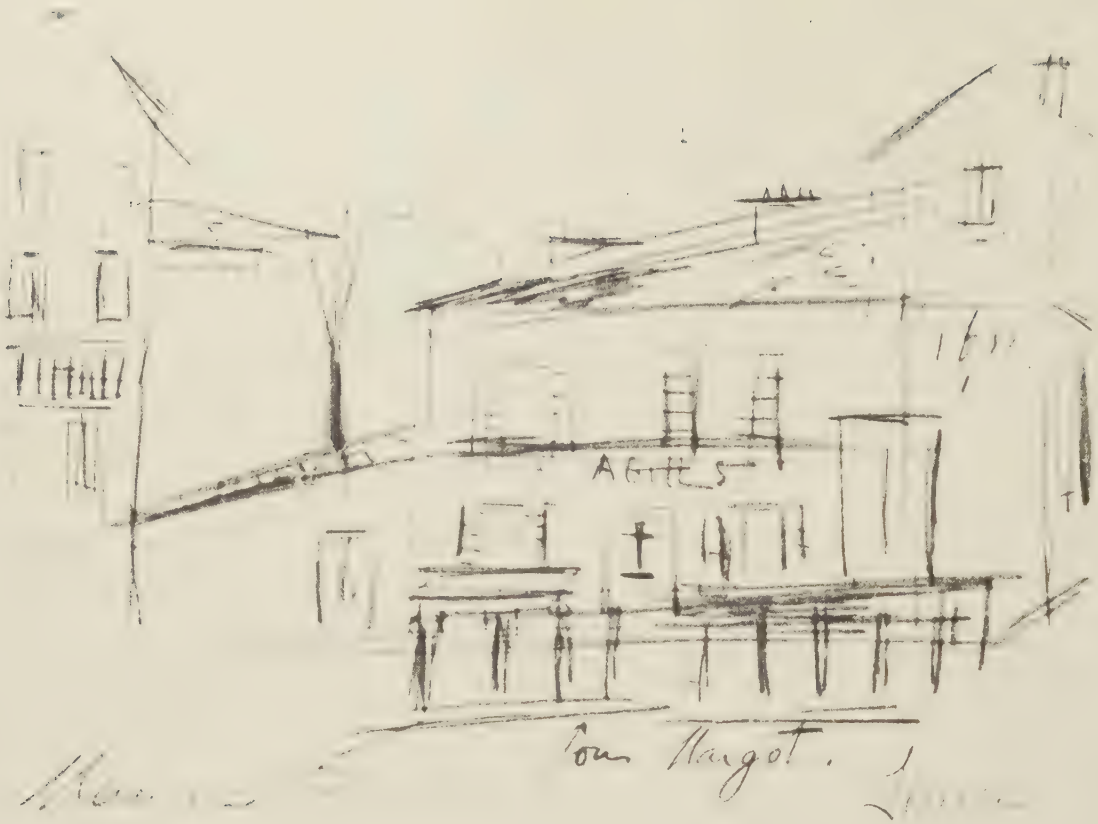
Utrillo, who painted as though at prayer, created in his pictures the legend of Montmartre which has since been absorbed into history, and which accounts for the greater part of his fame.

I

BLUE VASE

Circa 1909. Oil on canvas, 22″×15″. Henri Gaffié Collection, Beaulieu-sur-Mer.

A simple, unpretentious little canvas, of spontaneous charm, typical of a young painter taken with the sight of nature and the objects around him. It is also an exercise in the use of colour, and from that point of view proves that the reluctant novice of 1903 has gained experience and grown out of the very limited palette suggested by his mother. An exceptional painting, since in his early years he was occupied almost exclusively with unkempt suburban gardens, the streets of the Butte and a few buildings — mostly churches. Signed bottom right-hand corner. Exhibited in 1937 among the *Masterpieces of French Art* at the Petit Palais Museum in Paris. Reproduced in Tabarant's book on Utrillo and also in the *Complete Works*, Vol. 1, p. 471, No. 409.



II

PLACE DU TERTRE

Circa 1910. Oil on paper, 22″ × 29″. Pétridès Collection, Paris.

This picture should really be called " *The Church of Saint-Pierre de Montmartre and the Basilica of the Sacré-Cœur* ", because Utrillo set up his easel in a corner of the famous Place du Tertre, with his back to the square, about equidistant from the two buildings. The one on the left, the Hôtel du Tertre, was once called mockingly Hôtel de la Marine (Naval Hotel), being at that altitude about as far from the sea as possible. The one on the right was also a place of business, for the host at the sign of " Clairon " succeeded in making money in spite of his all too faithful clientèle of impoverished art students and poets. This signed picture was exhibited in 1959 at the Charpentier Gallery among " *One hundred paintings by Utrillo* " and is No. 158 on p. 208 of Vol. 1 of the *Complete Works*. Its subject is repeated in many of his other pictures, for he more than anyone was unable to resist the temptation to paint this square at the top of the Butte, which became almost an obsession with him. At the edge of this village square the modest old church dominates the " Mons martyrum " or " Mons martis ", scene of occasional funerals. An unimportant detail: Utrillo this time omitted the signboards and the words " *Vins, Café* " and so on, as in other versions of the same scene, but this picture overflows with the consciousness of human presence, and is a moving masterpiece by virtue of its colour technique alone.

III

CHURCH OF SAINT-SEVERIN (PARIS)

Circa 1913. Oil on canvas, 29″ × 21″. Chester Dale Collection, National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C.

From the subtle juxtaposition of colours, in particular the quality of the white stones in the bell-tower, and the overall freshness of this canvas, it is clear that it would be chosen by a great collector and claim its place on the walls of a prominent museum.
On p. 191 of the *Complete Works* are reproduced two " Church of Saint-Séverin " (N° 139, in the Brochier Collection at Lyons and N° 140 in the Leportier Collection) with only insignificant differences, such as posters on the walls, the proportion of certain elevations, the texture of the sky and the male silhouette, but this in no way detracts from the quality and appeal of this work.

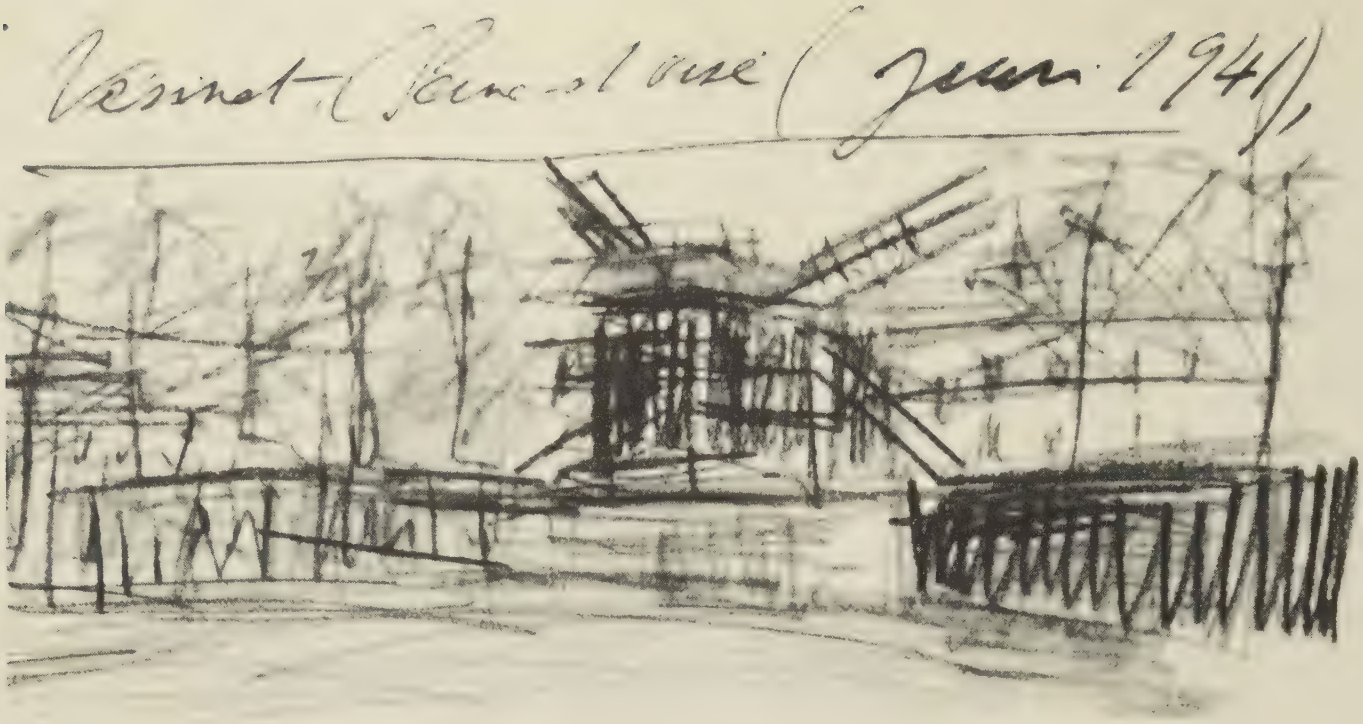
RESTAURANT
Maurice Utrillo V.

IV

BEAULIEU CHURCH

1922. Oil, 21¼″ × 26″. Henri Gaffié Collection, Beaulieu-sur-Mer.

A similarity of mood links this picture with all his others inspired by the Côte d'Azur and Corsica, which seem to have been painted in moments of relative relaxation, judging by the pleasant, graceful clouds tinged by the setting sun, and yet this canvas dates from the months immediately following his period under observation at the Sanatorium of Sainte-Anne. The fact that he recovered so fast and immediately executed a work like this demonstrates that he was not mad, as his mother so rightly asserted, though admittedly his mind was troubled with various worries and complexes exacerbated by wine. 1922 more or less marked the start of the period of "*gros derrières*". An interesting sidelight is that his brush usually depicts *five* feminine silhouettes, sometimes more, but very rarely an even number. Another interesting point for a psychiatrist: these women are always going away, turning their backs on the painter, who seems to remain in the square, dreaming of his unattainable fair ones.



V

LA RUE D'ANSE

1925. Oil, 26½″ × 33″. Pétridès Collection, Paris.

Another characteristic and authoritative work by reason of its intensity and freedom of colour, consciousness of the painter's temperament and the emotional " climate " through which this vulnerable, restless, sensitive soul was then passing. Painted in 1925, it belongs to the months when Utrillo, hedged in with watchful care and removed from the dangerous environment of the Butte — dangerous at least for someone as defenceless as he before drink and other snares of Bohemian life — could still appreciate the peaceful and comfortable existence at the Château de Saint-Bernard without boredom or discontent.
The evocation of this main street with many hardly distorted figures and even a carriage, reflects these circumstances.

OITURES à VOLONTÉ
CAMIONNAGE GRAVIER
VACHERESSE
Maurice Utrillo, V,
1935

VI

RUE DU CHEVALIER DE LA BARRE

1926. Oil, 40" × 32½". Dr. Rudinesco's Collection, Paris.

An important painting because of its quality and its size, it has often been mentioned and reproduced incorrectly as "*Rue Sainte-Rustique*", a mistake which can only be attributed to a total disregard of topography, since the Rue Sainte-Rustique, which abuts on Rue du Mont-Cenis, in fact starts at the bottom of the eastern slope of the Butte and finishes at the Basilica. This picture depicts the cupolas of Sacré-Cœur and the old church of Saint-Pierre (where Utrillo's funeral took place) from the end of the street.
It is signed, and dated September, 1926, and is Nº 1138 on p. 460 of Vol. 2 of the *Complete Works*. Two observations: firstly this is a valuable product of a period when the artist's sensitivity could find expression in a relatively calm, even bourgeois atmosphere, either in the house in Avenue Junot or at the Château de Saint-Bernard. Secondly it includes one of the characteristics of the 1922-26 period — the figures with "*gros derrières*".

VII

AN OLD STREET IN VILLEFRANCHE-SUR-MER

Circa 1928. Oil on canvas, 15″×21″. Oscar Ghez Collection, Geneva.

Reproduced in the *Complete Works* as N° 1209, Vol. 2, p. 500. Entered and reproduced in the catalogues of two exhibitions organized in 1964 under the auspices of the Modern Art Foundation of Geneva — one at Turin Museum and one at the Château of Annecy in Savoy. This was either directly inspired by his visit to Villefranche with Suzanne Valadon and Utter or perhaps recreated later from memory. It belongs to the Château de Saint-Bernard period and to the works containing "*gros derrières*", like his other paintings of Corsica and the Côte d'Azur.

VIII

VASE OF FLOWERS

Circa 1938-40. Oil, 18½″ × 21½″. Henri Gaffié Collection, Beaulieu-sur-Mer.

Obviously Utrillo could not avoid painting flowers, since he was so strongly possessed by his urgent need to paint sheltered from the curious, the nuisances, the mischievous; in fact *sheltered*, in his own home. And after all he was the son of Suzanne Valadon who, apart from nudes, was at her best in her flower paintings, which vie with those of Vlaminck. One of Utrillo's exhibitions even took his flower paintings as its main theme, and it so happened that he sometimes made such paintings as birthday presents for one or other of his close friends and relations.

Maurice, Utrillo, V.

IX

A MILL IN MONTMARTRE

(*Ex Romanet Collection*).

This rapid sketch seems to have been thrown together by someone either harassed or in a hurry. It may have been painted in 1939-40, if nostalgia for the former " maquis " prompted it, or perhaps much earlier — a view supported by the absence of any building between the Debray Mill and the fence along the street, because this is in fact the Avenue Junot, which was cut through the former " wood " of Montmartre so often mentioned in the works of Francis Carco, Roland Dorgelès and André Warnod.
At the right of the picture is approximately the site on which was built the house occupied from 1925 by Suzanne Valadon, Utter and Utrillo, so this may have been painted either between 1914 and 1925, or from memory after 1925. The flag flying from the roof of the mill suggests 1919 and the end of the War. However this may be, this is one of the most familiar scenes treated by the " painter of Montmartre ", with or without human figures.

X

A CHURCH

Museum of Modern Art, New York.

This is just called " Paris Church " in the catalogue of the Museum of Modern Art, and reproduced with the same title in Waldemar George's book, but I have been unable to find this church, in spite of having wandered on foot through every part of Paris since my childhood.

This fact does not of course detract from the admiration evoked by this well constructed, luminous work with its harmonious colouring. The gentle sky, the delicate grey of the tower, the sensitive affection which Utrillo lavished on the subjects he loved and his marvellous aptitude for giving them life, even if he was painting from a bad postcard, makes this picture typical of his instinctive genius.

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